

IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-37. (Canceled)

38. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

forming doped regions of a specified doping profile in a silicon region adjacent to a gate electrode having sidewall spacers formed thereon;

performing a first oxidation process to form a first oxidized portion of said doped regions;

performing a first etching process to remove said first oxidized portion of said doped regions;

after removing said first oxidized portion of said doped regions, performing a heat treatment process on said doped regions;

after performing said heat treatment process, performing a second oxidation process to form a second oxidized portion of said doped regions;

performing a second etching process to remove said second oxidized portion of said doped regions; ~~and~~

epitaxially growing a silicon layer on said doped regions after removing said second oxidized portion of said doped regions; and

forming a metal silicide in said grown silicon layer.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein said first and second etching processes employ a diluted etch solution comprising hydrogenated fluoride (HF), hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) and water.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein said first and second etching processes employ a diluted etch solution comprising ammonium hydroxide and hydrogen peroxide (APM).

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, further comprising cleaning a surface of said doped regions prior to performing said first oxidation process.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein said first and second etching processes are performed using a spray tool.

43. (Canceled)

44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously Presented) A method, comprising:
forming doped regions of a specified doping profile in a silicon region adjacent to a gate electrode having sidewall spacers formed thereon;
performing a first oxidation process to form a first oxidized portion of said doped regions;
performing a first etching process to remove said first oxidized portion of said doped regions;
after removing said first oxidized portion of said doped regions, performing a heat treatment process on said doped regions;

after performing said heat treatment process, performing a second oxidation process to form a second oxidized portion of said doped regions;
performing a second etching process to remove said second oxidized portion of said doped regions; and
epitaxially growing a silicon layer on said doped regions after removing said second oxidized portion of said doped regions.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein said first and second etching processes employ a diluted etch solution comprising hydrogenated fluoride (HF), hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) and water.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein said first and second etching processes employ a diluted etch solution comprising ammonium hydroxide and hydrogen peroxide (APM).

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising cleaning a surface of said doped regions prior to performing said first oxidation process.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein said first and second etching processes are performed using a spray tool.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising forming a metal silicide in said grown silicon layer.